

**“EUROPA REGIONAL” – A REGIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL
SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL BY THE LEIBNIZ INSTITUTE FOR
REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY
(LEIBNIZ-INSTITUT FÜR LÄNDERKUNDE, IfL)**

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with 12 figures and 4 tables in the text

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Summary

In 1992, the Institute for Regional Geography [Institut für Länderkunde, IfL], which could look back on a long tradition, was newly established. This coincided with the first fieldwork, both in regions where knowledge deficit was apparent, as well as in regions where processes of change were taking place at an extremely fast pace and with great impact as a result of social transformation.

Naturally, the research findings had to be made available to the public in the form of publications. Based on the new tasks, publications of the predecessor institute

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were discontinued. The knowledge and experience of the editors of these publications, however, remained, as did their desire to continue to contribute to the advancement of the discipline through scientific geographical publications in the future as well and to ensure its acceptance in the scientific community.

To this end, the first issue of the new *EUROPA REGIONAL* series appeared in 1993. Initially, priority was given to research results of the Institute, but increasingly contributions from scientists from other European countries were also included.

The journal has provided collaboration partners – particularly in Eastern Europe – with an opportunity to publish joint contributions in association with IfL staff. One of the main focuses of the content is on transformation processes and regional developments in the former Socialist countries.

Articles by scientists from Central and Eastern Europe are increasingly being submitted as it is important to them to publish these articles in Germany, and because *EUROPA REGIONAL* also has a readership abroad. More than 200 national and foreign institutions receive the journal via the publication exchange programme of the IfL's Central Library of Geography [Geographische Zentralbibliothek, GZB]. *EUROPA REGIONAL* is a geographical scientific journal from the German-speaking region that is recognised by the Association of Geographers at German Universities [Verband der Geographen an Deutschen Hochschulen, VDGH], and although it is not ISI-listed it does carry the status 'reviewed'.

Furthermore, since 2012 the print versions of all published contributions have been registered online in the Social Science Open Access Repository (SSOAR) on a permanent basis, which significantly increases the attractiveness of the journal. The abstracts/synopses of the contributions in German, English, French and Russian as well as the full versions are available open access on the IfL website.

Graphic illustrations show the exchange partners of the GZB who receive the journal, on the one hand, and on the other the main focus of the content of the contributions – starting in 1997.

1 Introduction

We at the Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography [Leibniz Institut für Länderkunde, IfL] have been publishing the journal "Europa Regional" since 1993. As is evident from the title, the substantive focus is thereby placed on Europe and on regional developments. This involves current, societally relevant, problem-orientated processes. Histo-geographical observations are incorporated in the contributions only insofar as they are required for the clarification of current affairs. An important thematic area continues to be constituted by transformation processes in Central and Eastern Europe, i.e. in the erstwhile Socialist countries.

Following the closure of the tradition-steeped Institute for Geography and Geoecology of the Academy of Sciences [Institut für Geographie und Geoökologie der Akademie der Wissenschaften] of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) at the end of the 1980s/beginning of the 1990s, the university-independent Institute for Regional Geography was established in 1992 – upon the recommendation of the German Council of Science and Humanities [Wissenschaftsrat]. Financed by federal funds and by resources provided by the Free State of Saxony [Freistaat Sachsen], the Institute for Regional Geography purported to conduct fundamental research in regional geography in Europe. After an initial – and necessary – induction and internal structuring phase, the first research concepts were developed.

Field work was initiated wherever the deficits in knowledge were particularly sizeable, as travel opportunities in these regions had previously been few and far between. Yet the change processes in those areas, too, charted a particularly visible and – to an extent – dramatic trajectory in consequence of the development of new societal and economic orders, new statehoods and boundaries, as well as by way of the process of integration of the European Community. Concomitantly, relationships with former collaborative partners in Central and Eastern Europe that had been interrupted were resumed and expanded. The establishment of in situ research bases in these countries facilitated such contact and cooperation.

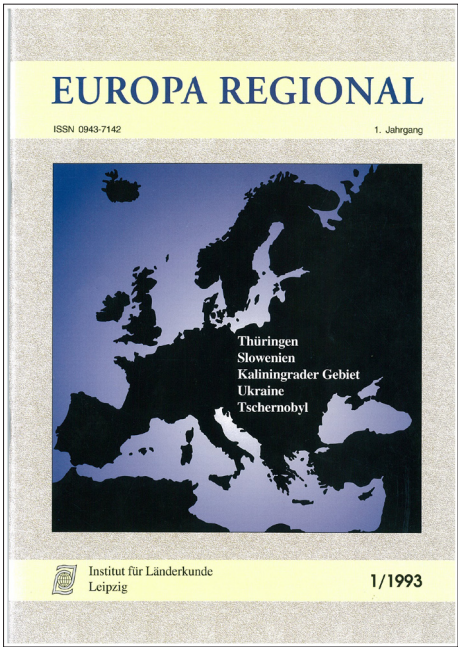
2 A new scientific journal

Naturally, the scientific findings of research activities should and had to be made available to the public – namely in the form of publications.

The knowledge and experience necessary for such publications to be brought out were in existence, since various series of publications had been brought out in the past, subsequently being discontinued, however, upon the fall of the Wall. Thus, there was a solid platform for scientific-geographical publications to contribute to the further development of the discipline and to its acceptance among the scientific community.

The first issue of the new scientific journal *EUROPA REGIONAL* appeared in 1993 and was populated by research findings pertinent to projects of the employees of the Institute that were furnished by the employees themselves. Contributions from the domain of regional European geography focused upon Slovenia, the Kaliningrad region [Kaliningradskaja oblast'] and Ukraine. Regional studies on Germany incorporated research into agriculture in Thuringia [Thüringen]. This was supplemented by a contribution of a collaborative partner in Ukraine.

Figure 1: The first issue of the new journal



The cover of EUROPA REGIONAL has changed twice over the years and is now aligned with the general corporate design of the Institute.

Figure 2: ER 1993-2001-2011



3 Exchange relationships

A number of global exchange relationships were established via the Central Library for Geography so that our journal was made available via other libraries the world over to a diverse and interested readership. The distribution of EUROPA REGIONAL was depicted graphically on display posters. The exchange partners of the IfL's Central Library of Geography [Geographische Zentralbibliothek, GZB] – numbering in excess of 200 – who receive the journal are depicted in Figures 3-5.

Figures 3-5: **Exchange partners in Germany and outside Germany, 2014**



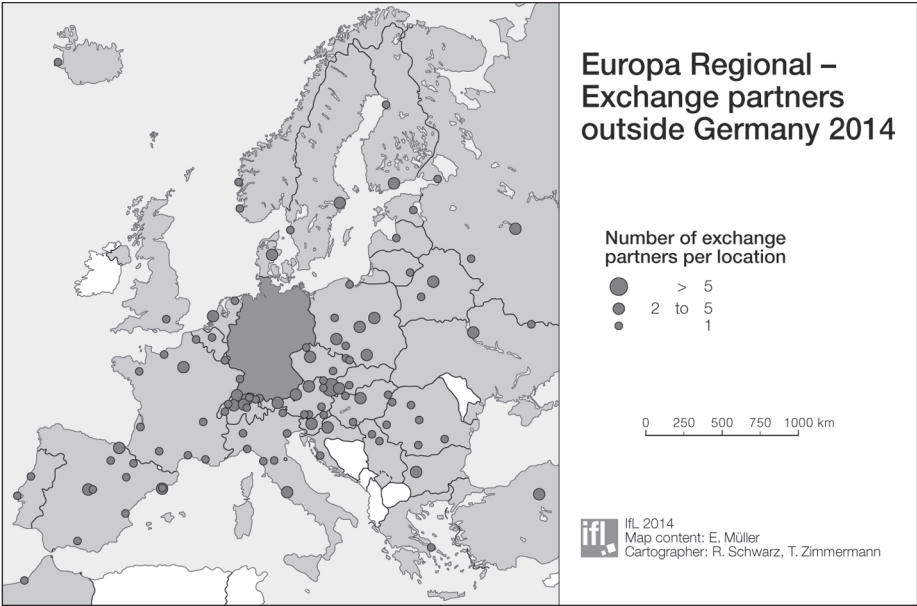


Table 1: Exchange partners EUROPA REGIONAL (2014)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Number</i>
Egypt	1	Netherlands	3
Argentina	5	The Netherlands Antilles	1
Australia	2	Norway	2
Belgium	4	Austria	27
Brazil	1	Pakistan	1
Bulgaria	2	Peru	1
Chile	3	Poland	14
Costa Rica	1	Portugal	2
Denmark	2	Romania	6
Germany	186	Russia	7
El Salvador	1	Saudi Arabia	1
Estonia	1	Sweden	3
Finland	6	Switzerland	16
France	12	Serbia	2
Georgia	1	Slovakia	3
Greece	1	Slovenia	5
United Kingdom	1	Spain	15
Island	1	South Africa, Republic	2
Italy	8	Czechia	8
Japan	7	Turkey	2
Colombia	1	Ukraine	3
Croatia	4	Hungary	5
Latvia	1	Uruguay	1
Lithuania	1	U.S.A.	7
Luxembourg	1	Venezuela	1
Marocco	1	Belarus	3
Mexico	1		

4 **Subscribers**

In addition to these, subscribers were also successfully acquired – particularly among the teaching and professional geographer community – who were able to leverage the scientific findings specific to their professional remit.

Table 2: **Subscribers (2014)**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number</i>
Germany	62
United Kingdom	1
Italy	1
Netherlands	3
Austria	4
Sweden	1
South Korea	1
Hungary	1

- Libraries
- Institutes/Research establishments
- Schools
- Universities/Colleges
- Companies
- Administration departments
- Private persons

5 **Spectrum of topics**

Its increasing prominence in the community resulted in what was essentially an ‘in-house journal’ becoming an organ of publication for geographers at home and abroad, particularly for our collaborative partners in Eastern Europe. In order to ensure that the quality of contributions remained high, the employees of the Institute for Regional Geography frequently served as co-authors. An in-house editorial committee assessed the pieces received.

From the very outset, an important characteristic of our journal was the outstanding cartographic layout, implemented with a high degree of expertise by the

cartography unit of the Institute for Regional Geography. In order to be discerned at a global level, each contribution incorporated synopses rendered in German, English, Russian and French.

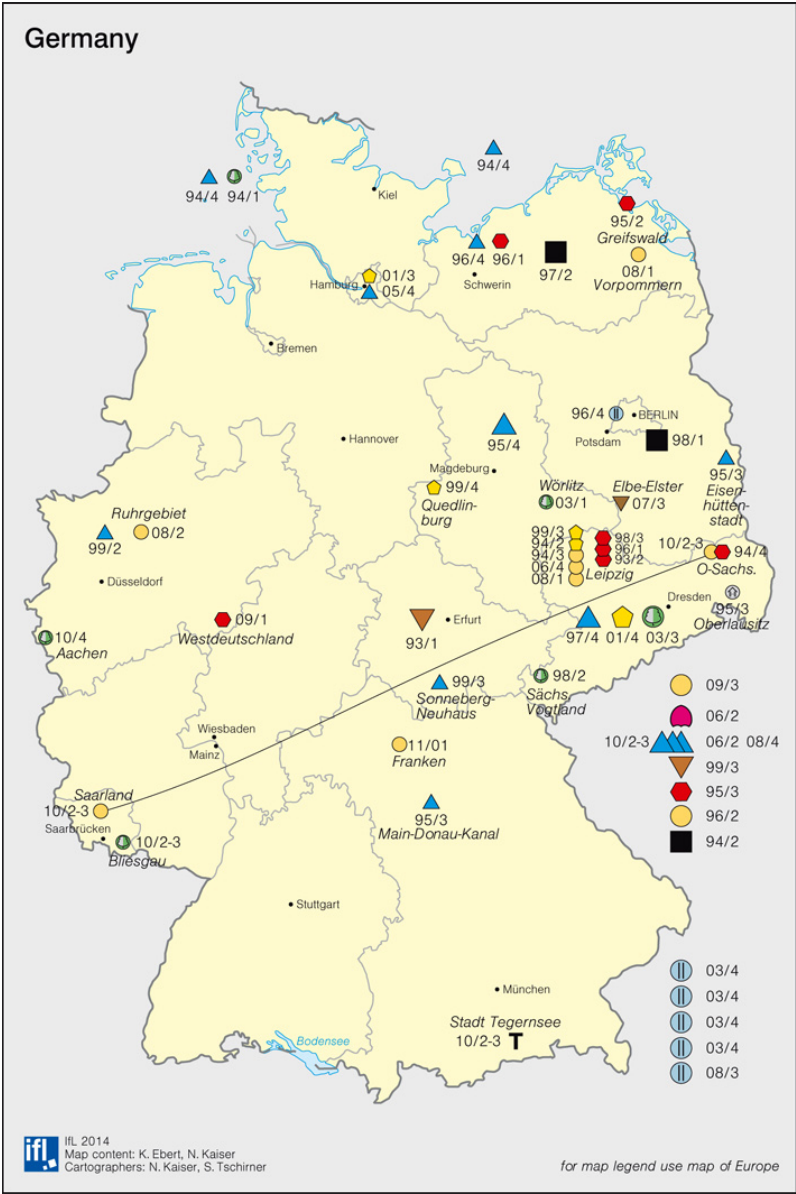
Over time, the spectrum of topics of the contributions became broader, for instance by way of research findings derived from related branches of science, and – increasingly – also derived from developments in western European countries. New authors from the most diverse establishments and institutions submitted their pieces; alongside issues featuring single contributions, moderated thematic issues or focal thematic issues were also conceptualised.

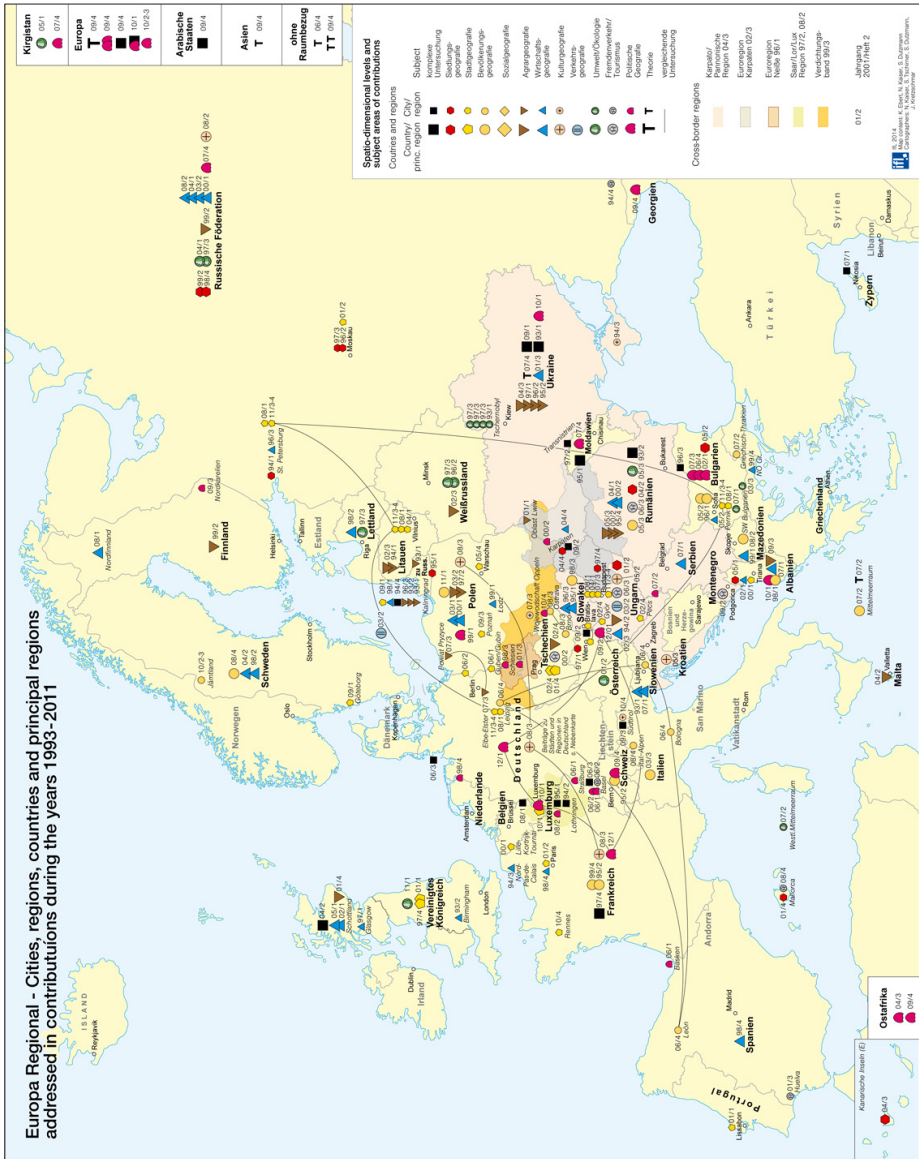
Table 3: Thematic issues or focal thematic issues

• →	ER 3/1997:	Chernobyl. Ten years after the nuclear power plant disaster
• →	ER 3-4/2000:	Transformation research: Status and perspectives (contributions from a scientific conference)
• →	ER 2/2002:	The national Sorbian minority – past and present
• →	ER 4/2003:	Aviation in Germany
• →	ER 4/2004:	A comparison of Europe's peripheries
• →	ER 4/2004:	The Carpathians – the mountain range neighbouring the Alps to the east
• →	ER 2/2005:	Bulgaria
• →	ER 3/2005:	Romania
• →	ER 1/2006:	Border cities and city boundaries
• →	ER 2/2006:	Cross-border development and cooperation
• →	ER 2/2007:	The Mediterranean
• →	ER 2/2009:	Research into Central Europe: Regional transformation – cross-border projects (DGFG Working Group on Central Europe)
• →	ER 4/2009:	Prospects – looking at Europe from the outside in
• →	ER 1/2010:	Europeanisation
• →	ER 1/2010:	Rural areas
• →	ER 3-4/2011:	Socio-spatial differentiations in conurbations in Central and Eastern Europe
• →	ER 2-3/2012:	Stigmatisation of urban neighbourhoods
• →	ER 1-2/2013:	Space and identity

The substantive focal points of the contributions – beginning in 1997 – have been captured and depicted cartographically, both for Germany and elsewhere. You can see the outcome in the following illustrations (Fig. 6-7).

Figures 6-7: **Cities, regions, countries and principal regions addressed in contributions during the years 1993-2011** (for colour illustration see <http://www.ifl-leipzig.de/de/publikationen/zeitschriften-und-reihen/europa-regional.html>)





Supplementing this is a compilation of the thematic issues or focal thematic issues that have been brought out. In this context, it is apparent that processes of transformation, cross-border developments and cooperation – and individual countries such as Bulgaria and Romania – have played and continue to play a major role.

The fact that individual contributions also trigger lively debates has become evident, a case in point being the piece by P. JORDAN, published in Issue 4/2005: Europe's macro-regions by cultural criteria.

Figure 8: Europe's macro-regions by cultural criteria without consideration of today's national boundaries



Figure 9: Europe's macro-regions by cultural criteria according to countries



Source: JORDAN P. (2005), Großgliederung Europas nach kulturräumlichen Kriterien. In: Europa Regional, 4, pp. 162-173.

Of course, this also illustrates the explosive nature of such a topic – contingent upon the respective status of debate within the country.

6 Reviewing process

The growing need to publish in peer-reviewed journals prompted the Institute for Regional Geography to satisfy criteria for the incorporation of EUROPA REGIONAL in a citation index. This involved the appointment of an international Scientific

Advisory Committee and appraisal in the course of a double-blind procedure. This is also being implemented in a wholly consistent manner with two expert external appraisers for each piece.

Table 4: **Editor – Editorial Board – Publisher**

<p>Peer-reviewed quarterly journal. The contributions deal with themes in regional geography and are lavishly illustrated with images and maps. Each contribution includes detailed summaries in English, French and Russian.</p>
<p>Editor Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde – Sebastian LENTZ</p>
<p>Editorial Board Jozsef BENEDEK (Cluj-Napoca), Zoltan DÖVENYI (Budapest), Horst FÖRSTER (Tübingen), Georg GLASZE (Erlangen-Nürnberg), Francis HARVEY (Leipzig), Martin HEINTEL (Wien), Tomasz KACZMAREK (Poznań), Benedikt KORF (Zürich), Zoltan KOVÁCS (Budapest), Peter LINDNER (Frankfurt), Mirella LODA (Florenz), Christian SCHULZ (Luxembourg), Jörg STADELBAUER (Freiburg), Antonín VAISHAR (Brno)</p>
<p>Editorial Office Evelin MÜLLER</p>
<p>Map and graphic editing Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde</p>
<p>Publishing house © Selbstverlag Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde e.V. Schongauerstraße 9, 04328 Leipzig Tel. +49 341 600 55-0, Fax +49 341 600 55-198</p>
<p>Internet http://www.ifl-leipzig.de/de/publikationen/zeitschriften-und-reihen/europa-regional.html equals&filter=Europa+Regional">http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/discover?filtertype=journal&filter_relational_operator>equals&filter=Europa+Regional</p>

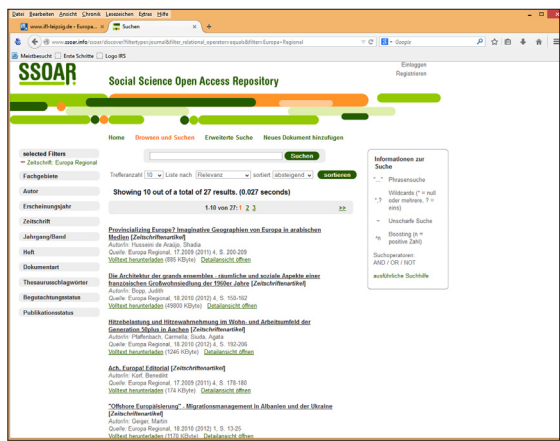
Nevertheless, incorporation in a citation index continues to be thwarted by our inability, till date, to bring out the journal on schedule and appropriate to years past. However, we are working intensively towards addressing the backlog.

EUROPA REGIONAL is, nonetheless, already a geographical scientific journal from the German-speaking region that is recognised by the Association of Geographers at German Universities [Verband der Geographen an Deutschen Hochschulen, VDGH], and although it is not ISI-listed, it does carry the quality status ‘reviewed’.

7 Open Access

Furthermore, since 2012 the print versions of all published contributions have been registered online in the Social Science Open Access Repository (SSOAR) on a permanent basis, significantly increasing the attractiveness of the journal.

Figure 10: SSOAR



The abstracts/synopses of the contributions in German, English, French and Russian, as well as the full-text versions, are available on an open-access basis on the website of the Institute for Regional Geography.

Figure 11: Our website

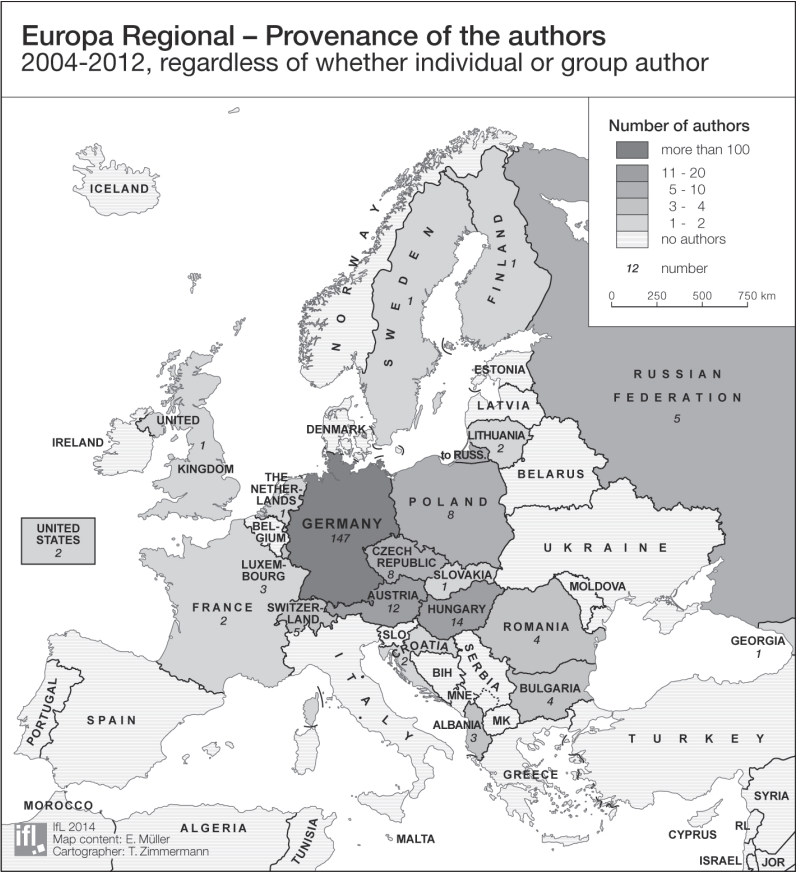


Older contributions are successively being made available online. In addition to the appraised scientific contributions, authors also have the opportunity to publish so-called reports. These are topical synopses of population censuses (Issue 4/2012) or descriptions of the agricultural situation in Albania (Issue 3/2009) or of project findings – such as the virtual research environment Tambora (Issue 1/2011).

8 Authors

So as to gain an overview of the provenance of the authors, the following synopsis (Fig. 12) has been prepared (irrespective of whether a single author is involved or a member of a group of authors).

Figure 12: Overview of the provenance of the authors (2004-2012)



In preparation for this paper, I also considered the conference programme specific to the extent to which conference participants are associated with our EUROPA REGIONAL journal. I then came upon a member of our Scientific Advisory Committee – Josef BENEDEK –, several authors, Peter JORDAN being one of them, and several external appraisers whose independent opinion ensures the high intellectual standard of our journal. Thanks to all of them for their solid cooperation. And, of course, we are delighted every time a piece is submitted to us.